

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6843

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Human Services & Corrections, February 05, 2008

Title: An act relating to youth placements.

Brief Description: Addressing eligibility requirements for youth placements in HOPE centers and responsible living skills programs.

Sponsors: Senators Hargrove and Rasmussen.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Human Services & Corrections: 2/1/08, 2/5/08 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES & CORRECTIONS

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Hargrove, Chair; Regala, Vice Chair; Stevens, Ranking Minority Member; Brandland, Carrell, Marr and McAuliffe.

Staff: Jennifer Strus (786-7316)

Background: A HOPE Center is an agency licensed by the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) to provide temporary residential placement and other services to street youth. A "street youth" is defined as a person under age 18 who lives outdoors or in another unsafe location not intended for occupancy and who is not residing with his or her parent or at his or her legally authorized residence. A street youth may remain in a HOPE center for 30 days while services are arranged and a placement coordinated.

A Responsible Living Skills Program (RLSP) is an agency licensed by DSHS to provide transitional living services that emphasize the achievement of independent living skills competency. To be eligible for placement in an RLSP, the minor must be dependent under chapter 13.34 RCW and must have lived in a HOPE Center or in a secure crisis residential center.

Summary of Bill: To be eligible for placement in a HOPE Center, a minor must be either a street youth or a youth who, without placement in a HOPE Center will continue to participate in increasingly risky behavior. Minors may also self-refer to a HOPE Center. Payment for a HOPE Center bed is not contingent upon prior approval by DSHS.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

If a minor's caseworker determines that placement in an RLSP would be the most appropriate placement given the minor's current circumstances, prior residence in a HOPE center or secure CRC is not required before placement in an RLSP.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 31, 2008.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: This bill contains technical changes to the HOPE act. One of the main features has always been that a youth can self-refer, and yet that fact never appeared in the statutory language. Have heard from a number of providers across the state that when youth are ready to go into an RLSP, it doesn't always make sense for them to be placed in a HOPE Center or secure CRC first - those placements can sometimes have a destabilizing effect on the youth. That is why it is important to delink the HOPE Center/secure CRC prior placement requirement from the RLSP placement in certain situations.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Jim Theofelis, Mockingbird Society; Susan Moore, Community Youth Services.